

To: Garrison, Geoffrey[Garrison.Geoffrey@epa.gov]
From: Kluesner, Dave
Sent: Mon 3/23/2015 7:42:55 PM
Subject: PRESS RELEASE: EPA Responds to Incident that Leaves Four People Ill on St. John; EPA Working with U.S. Virgin Islands Government on Ongoing Investigation

EPA Responds to Incident that Leaves Four People Ill on St. John

EPA Working with U.S. Virgin Islands Government on Ongoing Investigation

(Monday, March 23, 2015) The EPA is working closely with the U.S. Virgin Island government to investigate an incident reported to the U.S. Virgin Islands government and EPA on March 20, 2015. On March 20, 2015, paramedics responded to a call that four people in a family staying at the Sirensa Condominium Resort in Cruz Bay, St. John became very ill. Family members were subsequently hospitalized.

The EPA is looking into whether the family was made ill by a pesticide called methyl bromide, which may have been used to fumigate a room at the resort on March 18, 2015. The use of methyl bromide in the U.S. is restricted due to its acute toxicity. Only certified applicators are allowed to use it in certain agricultural settings and is not authorized for use in dwellings. Health effects of acute exposure to methyl bromide are serious and include central nervous system and respiratory system damage.

“Pesticides can be very toxic and it is critically important that they be applied properly and used only as approved by EPA,” said Judith A. Enck, EPA Regional Administrator. “Protecting people’s health in the U.S. Virgin Islands is of paramount importance. The EPA is actively working to determine how this happened and will make sure steps are taken to prevent this from happening to others at these vacation apartments or elsewhere.”

The EPA is continuing to work with the U.S. Virgin Islands government and others to gather information and will ensure that appropriate steps are taken if it determines any environmental regulations or laws were violated.

For more information about EPA’s pesticide program and its requirements, visit <http://www.epa.gov/pesticides/>. For more information on methyl bromide, visit <http://www.epa.gov/region2/methyl-bromide.pdf>.

15-017 # # #

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From: Story, Karen

Sent: Monday, March 23, 2015 3:18 PM

Subject: PRESS RELEASE: EPA Responds to Incident that Leaves Four People Ill on St. John;
EPA Working with U.S. Virgin Islands Government on Ongoing Investigation

News Release: USVI INCIDENT